

## CLAIMS

1. An absorbent article comprising a liquid absorbent layer  
(4), the absorbent article having a skin surface and a garment  
5 surface, wherein

compressed grooves (11) where the liquid absorbent layer  
(4) is compressed and recessed from the side of the skin surface  
toward the garment surface are provided to extend in a  
longitudinal direction of the article, the compressed grooves  
10 (11) being located laterally apart from a longitudinal  
centerline (Oy-Oy) of the article, a separation distance between  
the compressed grooves (11) being smallest on a lateral reference  
line (Ox-Ox) of the article or within a range of an equal distance  
forward and rearward from the lateral reference line (Ox-Ox)  
15 in the longitudinal direction, wherein

a rear flexible portion (16) where the liquid absorbent  
layer (4) is recessed from the side of the garment surface toward  
the skin surface is provided to extend toward a rear end edge  
(1d) of the article from a starting point (16a) that is located  
20 closer to the rear end edge (1d) than the lateral reference  
line (Ox-Ox), at least a portion of the rear flexible portion  
(16) being located between the compressed grooves (11).

2. An absorbent article as set forth in claim 1, wherein  
25 a front flexible portion (15) where the liquid absorbent layer  
(4) is also recessed from the side of the garment surface toward  
the skin surface is provided to extend toward a front end edge

(1c) of the article from a starting point (15a) that is located closer to the front end edge (1c) than the lateral reference line (Ox-Ox), at least a portion of the front flexible portion (15) being located between the compressed grooves (11), wherein  
5 the front and rear end edges (1c, 1d) are located an equal distance apart from the lateral reference line (Ox-Ox), and the front and rear flexible portions (15, 16) are also located an equal distance apart from the lateral reference line (Ox-Ox).

10 3. An absorbent article as set forth in claim 2, wherein the compressed grooves (11) and the front and rear flexible portions (15, 16) are formed in a pattern symmetrical about the lateral reference line (Ox-Ox).

15 4. An absorbent article as set forth in claim 1, wherein within a range of an equal distance forward and rearward from the lateral reference line (Ox-Ox) in the longitudinal direction, additional compressed grooves (17) are provided side by side with the compressed grooves (11).

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5. An absorbent article as set forth in claim 1, wherein a mean thickness of the absorbent article at both sides of the rear flexible portion (16) is smaller than that at a region extending an equal distance forward and rearward from lateral  
25 reference line (Ox-Ox) in the longitudinal direction but not overlapping with the rear flexible portion (16).

6. An absorbent article as set forth in claim 1, wherein pressure-sensitive adhesive layers (19) for adhering the article to an undergarment are disposed on the garment surface, the pressure-sensitive adhesive layers (19) being located laterally  
5 apart from the longitudinal centerline (Oy-Oy) and present at least on the lateral reference line (Ox-Ox) and on both sides of the rear flexible portion (16).